

MINUTES
McClure River IP
1st Public Meeting

WHEN: July 16 2019; 6:00-8:00pm

WHERE: McClure River Kiwanis Building, McClure, VA

ATTENDEES:

- Karen Kline- Biological Systems Engineering, Virginia Tech.
- Brian Benham- Biological Systems Engineering, Virginia Tech
- Peggy Kiser- McClure citizen
- William Kiser- McClure citizen
- David Yates- Dickenson County Board of Supervisors
- Noreen Fleming- Former McClure River Restoration Coordinator
- Perry Moore- McClure River Kiwanis
- Ron Phillips- Dickenson County Public Service Authority (PSA)
- Greg Estoll- Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF)
- Brian Stanley- Virginia Department of Health (VDH)
- Jackson C. Stay? (name not legible)
- Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
 - Stephanie Kreps – NPS Coordinator – SW Regional Office
 - Martha Chapman – Former TMDL Coordinator – SW Regional Office

Meeting purpose: To kick start the development of a cleanup plan for the McClure River Watershed in Dickenson County; Share information; Engage the public in this process with their participation.

Meeting goal: Answer questions and identify stakeholders to help develop the Implementation Plan (IP) (also known as a Water Quality Improvement Plan or Clean Up Plan).

Stephanie Kreps (DEQ) gave a brief introduction of the meeting purpose, overview of TMDLs/IPs and set the context of the meeting. Handouts of the presentation were provided.

Karen Kline (BSE, VT) gave an overview of the TMDL Assessment (approved in January 2018) and a summary of next steps.

A 30 day public comment period starts July 17, 2019 until August 15, 2019 to comment on the development of the IP.

There will be one Working Group/Steering Committee since the members overlap.

Residential Septic

Ron Phillips of the PSA comments: The alternative system in Nora is half done and they're acquiring more property to do the rest. This was funded with AML money and started about 2 years ago. There are 3 houses being treated and another one will be online by this fall. A small package plant like this one costs about \$100,000. Alternative systems are ideal for Buffalo Creek for clusters of houses. The only way to make this work is for grant money to pay for it (DEQ, Rural Development, ARC, etc.) and the County to own/maintain it. Conventional systems

in more populated areas would work. The SWVA Regional Waste Water Study done back in 2005 identified the McClure watershed as a priority. A copy of the PER for Buffalo Creek is at the Lonesome Pine SWCD and Noreen Fleming said she could provide a copy if needed. No other projects like this are currently planned in the area.

VDH says because of the high water table, it's difficult to install alternative onsite systems. More community package systems like Nora is what's needed. Old systems using the pre-1982 standards (within 2 inches of the water table) are contributing to the impairment (so these are legal failing systems). These existing, conventional systems need to be upgraded to bring them up to the updated standards. They would need to meet direct dispersal Tier 3 treatment for an upgrade. This can cost \$10,000 to \$15,000 per system. Roaring Fork area is a good example of this scenario.

Other non-resident facilities contributing to impairment? Probably 3-4 churches in the area contributing to bacteria impairment. Commercial buildings would require a permit and most of them are in more populated areas with sewer. Building permits are not issued unless they have an approved system. There's a need for the county to enforce regulation to upgrade abandoned and then re-occupied households (puts burden on property owner to bring up to code).

Can use mound systems here but not conventional Wisconsin mounds. If the existing drainfields can be used it can work. They won't last long in the floodplain and topography is a challenge here.

The size of the Trammel sewer treatment plant is what's needed in McClure. The McClure lumber lot would be a good spot for a sewer treatment plant.

Certain areas to target efforts? Buffalo Creek and McClure mainstem. Going north (downstream) toward Clinchco it's not as bad.

McClure River Kiwanis has had successful projects in the past with lots of participation. They did outreach and streambank stabilization along with residential pumpouts but they ran out of money. The community doesn't realize how long it takes for things to get done and many have gotten tired of waiting for help.

There's a need for easements on Rose Ridge and Big Ridge for septic system drainfields. There are at least 2 homes on the ridgeline that either don't have enough area to install the properly sized drainfield and/or the soil is more appropriate below them. VDH is unsure what to do. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) recently acquired the Forest Land Group property and may be open to providing easements for these drainfields. It was suggested that they participate in future meetings now that they own most of the watershed. Stephanie Kreps said she'd put Brian in touch with Brad Kreps at TNC.

Agriculture

There's not a lot of agriculture in this area—mostly on the ridges. Because of the steep topography, this causes a lot of runoff and for it to get to streams quickly. Horses, goats and beef cattle exist. Retention/sediment ponds were suggested as a good way to control runoff. Waste Management BMPs would be good to address this problem too.

Affordability is imperative for this county. The farmer needs to get a benefit out of doing these BMPs (water, feed structures, manure storage, etc.). Most farms here have ponds as main watering source. Livestock exclusion from ponds would be good.

Pet waste

There are a lot of dogs in this watershed- 5-6 per household. It was said that there are more dogs than people in the county. Kennel laws need to be enforced. There are no leash laws in the county. Pet waste trash cans are needed in public spaces.

Other

There's a lot of potential for trout fishing in the area (tourism). Caney Creek used to be stocked with trout. DGIF stocks Russell Fork and they are being caught in McClure so they're moving upstream.

Best ways for outreach include: Radio is the best (92.1 FM and 1430 AM are the best way to advertise). Contact Betty Flemming 835-8626, not between 10-11am, early in the morning best. Newspaper; flyers at Nora Post Office, Triple T gas station and McClure Quick Way; Kiwanis Fall Fest (Oct 30) at the ball field for Trick or Treating (set up table, could do survey); Haysi Fall Festival (Oct); Spearhead Trails for education; Ervington back to school supplies (already been done); Town Hall meeting for Sheriff election (Aug 12) at Binn Counts Community Center.

Who would be a potential party to apply for a grant? Soil and Water Conservation District, County, McClure Kiwanis, Cumberland Plateau PDC, etc.

The Indoor Plumbing Rehabilitation (IPR) is no longer administered by People Inc. and now administered by Mount Rogers PDC for the region. The waitlist is really long. SERCAP is more a funding source for the PSA and don't see it as much (not a lot of funds available). They have more money for water than sewer but do have money for planning and feasibility studies

Next Working Group meeting was planned for August 20 at 5-7pm at the McClure Kiwanis building in McClure. It was suggested to be very specific on the information needs and keep the presentation short/targeted to keep everyone's attention. To advertise, it was suggested to set up a Facebook event page and to call Betty Flemming to announce during her community events segment. Food should be provided (Noreen will bring pastries).